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Los Angeles City Council



BERNARD C. PARKS

Councilmember, Eighth District

May 11, 2012

Coliseum Commission
3911 Figueroa Street
Los Angeles, CA 90037

Dear Commissioners,

In light of today's revelations in the Los Angeles Times about the Fair Political Practice Commission's (FPPC) investigation of Coliseum Interim General Manager John Sandbrook, I am insisting that Monday's scheduled vote on the modified lease with the University of Southern California be delayed until this inquiry is resolved.

Being accused of illegally seeking a job with USC while negotiating the proposed lease is a serious charge, especially because it could be considered a felony and fall under the jurisdiction of the District Attorney's Public Integrity Unit.

Constant rumors of a cozy relationship between Mr. Sandbrook and USC are what prompted me to suggest that: ***"No employee or agent of the current Coliseum Commission who has participated in the negotiations with USC on the draft Expanded Lease or who has participated in analyzing and providing advice to Coliseum management on the Expanded Lease should benefit, seek employment or a consulting relationship with USC at the conclusion of these negotiations"*** in letter "H" of my final response to the lease that was sent to the Commission yesterday.

For more than a year, we have experienced the consequences of acting too slowly in response to a crisis situation. It's something I'm sure none of us would like to live through again. If true, the offenses would mirror the alleged conflict-of-interest violations that led to the indictments of former Coliseum officials. Throughout the indictments, the D.A.'s Office references how the former Coliseum officials consistently engaged in self dealing under the color of authority.

Besides, Mr. Sandbrook's avid pursuit of this deal, which was further illustrated by his rushed scheduling of a special meeting to vote on the lease Monday, simply doesn't look good when coupled with the allegations involved in this investigation. Moving forward with the vote only opens up the process to even more scrutiny from a growing list of critics, including state officials.

I have gone on record demanding the resignation of Mr. Sandbrook, partly because I believe he has been more of an advocate for USC than for the Coliseum during the lease process and also because of his inaction during the venue's current financial scandal.

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This morning's article highlights his lax oversight of luxury car leases and improper gas card and credit card use by Coliseum employees. But, in my view, what was most embarrassing was his unwavering protection of the Coliseum's former Chief Financial Officer, Ronald Lederkramer, who signed a lot of the checks associated with the scandal.

In July of last year, Mr. Sandbrook, tried unsuccessfully to reward Mr. Lederkramer with a 17% raise. This year, a judge rewarded Mr. Lederkramer with immunity in exchange for his testimony.

The circumstances surrounding Mr. Sandbrook, the FPPC investigation as well as USC's less-than-encouraging reaction to the accusations is more than enough reason to cancel Monday's specially-scheduled vote on the lease.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Bernard C. Parks", is written over the typed name.

BERNARD C. PARKS
Councilmember

cc: David Demerjian, Office of the District Attorney- Public Integrity Unit
cc: Anna Caballero, Secretary- California State and Consumer Services Agency

BCP:b2

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May 11, 2012

David Demerjian
L.A. County D.A.'s Office
Public Integrity Unit
320 W. Temple Street, Rm. #766
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Mr. Demerjian,

I am requesting that your office look into the Fair Political Practice Commission's (FPPC) investigation of Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum Interim General Manager John Sandbrook as reported in the *Los Angeles Times* today.

According to the *Times*, an FPPC official claims that a complaint filed with the agency alleges that Mr. Sandbrook had discussions with University of Southern California officials about working for them after the Coliseum's governing commission completes lease negotiations with the private school.

It should be pointed out that Mr. Sandbrook has been one of the lead negotiators on the lease that, if approved, would turn over control of the historic venue to USC. And, he has been one of the biggest advocates for the deal—going so far as to rush a special meeting on to the commission calendar, so the lease can be voted on Monday.

I am asking my colleagues on the commission that the meeting be cancelled in light of the investigation because I realize that the allegations are serious and, perhaps, felonious and could fall under the jurisdiction of your Public Integrity Unit.

My concerns do not stop with Mr. Sandbrook's alleged actions. I believe it is also worth examining USC's potential role in any discussions that may have occurred involving Mr. Sandbrook's future employment.

Constant rumors of a cozy relationship between Mr. Sandbrook and USC are what prompted me to suggest that: *"No employee or agent of the current Coliseum Commission who has participated in the negotiations with USC on the draft Expanded Lease or who has participated in analyzing and providing advice to Coliseum management on the Expanded Lease should benefit, seek employment or a consulting relationship with USC at the conclusion of these negotiations"* in my final response to the lease that was sent to the Commission yesterday.

Respectfully,

BERNARD C. PARKS
Councilmember

cc: Anna Caballero- California State and Consumer Services Agency
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